The Progressive Review

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Clinton: my budget, right or wrong

If, as Clinton suggested, support for his economic policies is a sign of patriotism, then it is just as fair to say the President himself displayed disloyalty as recently as the late primaries -- during which he took a number of positions contrary to what national fealty now apparently demands. In fact, Clinton is a political Don Juan whose serial affairs with economic and social policies share only the passion he exhibits on their behalf. The strength of his current economic convictions can be gauged by his own declaration that he would not determine their nature until as late as possible. Thus we have been called upon to reinvent America based on decisions reached only a few weeks ago.

In the rhetoric of an earlier age, we might have said that Clinton lied to us, just, if not more so, than Bush did when he asked us to read his lips. The preferred contemporary euphemism, however, is that he is "addressing new realities."

And what exactly are these new realities? A somewhat higher projected deficit than that readily available to Clinton from the Congressional Budget Office last August, and, far more importantly, an extraordinarily slow economic recovery.

At this point after the 1982 recession, over 6 million new jobs had been created. At this point after the 1975 recession, nearly four million. But at this point well less than a million new jobs have turned up in the wake of the latest downturn.

The public knows this and polls have consistently showed that it preferred job-creating action before cutting the deficit. Nonetheless, since the election, Clinton has become a convert to the deficit-mongering school of economics.

This school has been very effective in obscuring what should be obvious: reducing the deficit will not cut the multi-trillion dollar national debt responsible for the level of our interest payments, rather it will only slow its growth. To actually reduce the national debt, and therefore the cost of carrying it, our government would have to make a profit and apply the surplus to retiring the debt. Should such an unusual event occur, however, there would be massive pressure -- including much from the same sources now complaining about the deficit -- to send the surplus back to citizens in form of tax reductions. Given the nature of American politics, it is difficult to perceive of a time when a serious reduction in the national debt would be considered politically practical.

It is also worth noting that even if Clinton were to, say, raise public investment expenditures $100 billion (to bring up us to British levels, but still well behind the Germans and Japanese) it would add only about one-quarter of one percent to the national debt, a small price to get the economy moving again.

Thus what the deficit hawks say they want simply isn't going to happen and the effects on the budget of all current alternative policies are far less than one would gather from either the politicians or the media.

In truth, one of the quickest and most effective ways to lower the annual deficit is to make it easier to for people to pay taxes -- by creating new jobs and by ending the Reagan/Bush economic crunch. A study in Maine, for example, found a decline of 15-20% in state income and sales tax revenue in recent years. Even the best run state can't handle that sort of retreat.

The Clinton policy is not being driven so much by deficit figures, but by a desire to capture those voters who went for Perot and who think we are just one balanced

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Bucking the system since 1966

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budget amendment away from nirvana. It is influenced more by fear than logic and thus we find Clinton hyper-ventilating over the federal debt with the best of the reactionaries.

Clinton, as a result, now finds himself fighting with his own arguments. He wants to expand the economy but he raises taxes; he wants to cut the deficit but he also wants to be seen as spending money on infrastructure. When it's all over, each segment of his program has another that works against it.

Last March, 100 economists including 6 Nobel Prize winners, wrote George Bush and asked him to spend $50 billion on public works and education, provide investment tax credits, not to raise taxes nor cut government expenditures, and to forget about the deficit until the economy is back on track. On balance, Clinton has chosen a markedly different course; a choice based not on a coherent alternative theory, but on political calculations. We will have to sacrifice, no doubt, but it would be nice to think we were doing so on behalf of the nation rather than because of the exigencies of political ambition.

Managed competition: Reaganism returns

Last year, the health industry spent $22 million to convince our politicians to do things its way. It spent $2 million to make sure Bill Clinton's campaign stayed on track.

It appears to have been a wise investment. There is stunningly little talk in Washington these days of the single-payer, Canadian-type system that a majority of the American public has said in polls that it would like. When the issue is raised, opponents argue -- borrowing from the propaganda of the health industry -- that Canada's system means long waits for surgery and other horrors. In fact, Canadians -- like other citizens in countries with real national health insurance -- are decidedly more satisfied with their health care than are Americans. Despite US health industry disinformation, 96% of all Canadians over the age of 15 get their care within one week of requesting it.

In what may be the best recent summary of the health care situation, the September *Consumer Reports*, hardly a radical publication, concluded:

A single-payer system that draws its inspiration from Canada's is not the best solution for those doctors who are mainly concerned about their own pockets, or for hospitals with ambitions to become major medical centers. It certainly isn't a good solution for health insurance companies; many of them would go out of business. But it is the best solution for the growing number of consumers shut out of the private-insurance market and the even larger number who have reason to fear their coverage might disappear at any time.

Yet not only are traditional politicians, led by Clinton, dedicated to not considering a Canadian-type

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system, the media is not offering the option, and many trade unions and progressive groups have already caved in on the issue.[1]

There is a potential of a vast coalition for a single-payer system, but many of the organizations that would form it are either otherwise engaged or fail to see the relationship between national health care and their brand of progressive politics. A particularly poignant example can be found in gay and lesbian organizations that, because of the AIDS crisis, should have more than passing interest in the subject but instead are absorbed with acceptance by the state of Colorado and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Thus, we find ourselves considering instead the idea of "managed competition," a cynical oxymoron at best, and at worst another in a decades-long series of political ploys designed to appear to be dealing with the problem while, at the same time, not endangering health industry profits.

If Ronald Reagan had proposed such a scheme, many of its current advocates would be on the talk shows decrying it as a fraud.

In fact, it is not unlikely that Reagan might have, given the provenance of the idea as reported recently by Tim Knaak in the *Organizer*.

Knaak traces the concept to Alain C. Enthoven, a former RAND Corporation think-tanker and once chief "whiz kid" for that master of grand schemes soon to go awry: Robert McNamara. Enthoven was part of the Reagan transition team in 1980.

In 1965, RAND did a study of health-care for New York City and concluded that the solution lay in the private sector. In 1970, Joseph Newhouse, a senior economist for RAND described medical care as a "luxury." By 1975, Knaak reports, Newhouse was recommending a 10% deductible "to introduce 'market forces' that would supposedly keep costs down by preventing 'overuse' of the system. By 1989, a major study suggested that a 50% deductible would be needed to keep costs down."

Meanwhile, the costs kept growing. In 1988, the Congressional Budget Office looked at Enthoven's managed competition idea and estimated that it would add another $80 billion to the deficit without slowing healthcare inflation.

In 1989, Enthoven presented a revised version of his plan in an article published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, in which he said that was necessary for "low income people to have healthcare coverage even if they must pay a substantial part of the costs themselves."

Knaak believes that most of the 30 or so reform plans in Congress today are based on the Enthoven scheme, relying on the same market forces that created today's health crisis to somehow bring costs down and increase coverage.

There are variations to be sure. Clinton's people have proposed buying cooperatives, for example, to help small businesses and individuals bargain for rates. But at its core, the debate over health care in Washington is largely over which form of Reaganesque "free market" health plan to adopt. You'd think after 12 years, we might have learned something.

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[1]An exception is Americans for Democratic Action. Also, Sen. Paul Wellstone, Rep. John Conyers and others will be introducing single-payer legislation this month. Those wishing to help push the single-payer idea can contact the offices of Wellstone and Conyers or call ADA at 202-785-59809

Free trade: no free lunch

The beat goes on for the North American Free Trade Agreement. The NAFTA story has been atrociously covered by the media but fortunately the word is getting out about this sweetheart deal for American corporations, and opposition appears to be growing. Here are a few reasons why:

- Ernest Hawkes of Reading, Ohio, writes to tell us about his daughter -- a single parent, 42, with a 13-year-old child -- who has been laid off at her plant after 15 years on the job. The company has opened a plant in Mexico where the workers are paid $1.75 an hour as opposed to $12 in the US.
- *US News & World Report* says that the average Mexican trucker earns about $7 a day, while US truck drivers earn $13 an hour, not including benefits.
- Stanford economist Clark Reynolds estimates that NAFTA could produce a 15-20% drop in real wages for millions of lower-skilled American workers.
- The Greens point out that NAFTA would increase pesticides in food: "NAFTA uses standards from Codex Alimentarius, which is a Rome-based UN group heavily influenced by multinational chemical and agribusiness interests. Codex allows high residues of pesticides such as DDT, alar, aldrin, and dieldrin -- all banned or severely restricted in the US -- on fruits, vegetables, grains and other food products. Laws restricting the importation of food contaminated with these poisons could be challenged as illegal trade barriers."
- American farmers would be hurt by agribusiness taking over Mexican land and underselling family farms in both countries.
- The American government would be limited in banning chemicals whose danger has not been fully determined.

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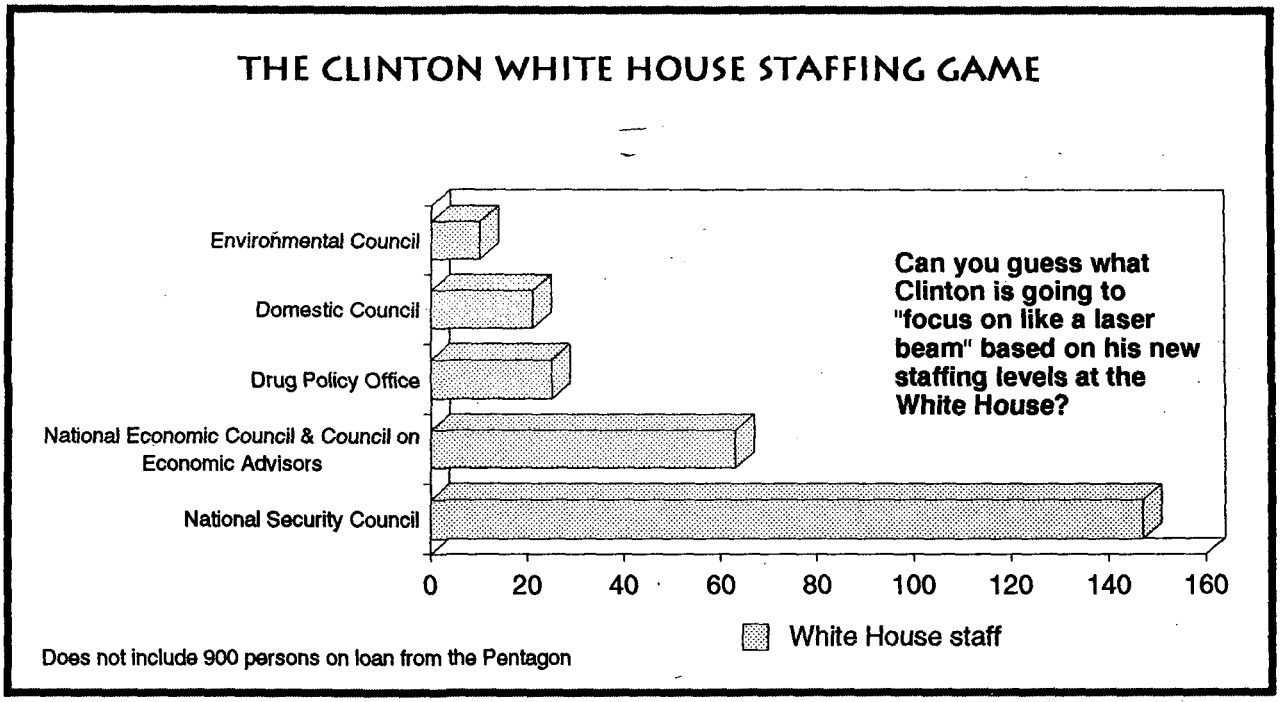

• State and local laws on hazardous waste, auto emissions, endangered species and food labelling could be considered trade barriers and effectively challenged by corporations. The Greens note that Canada has already sued the US to permit the importation of asbestos and that an international trade panel has ruled that portions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 are illegal.

• Under NAFTA, nations would not be allowed to use trade sanctions to enforce international environmental, health, human rights or labor rights laws.

• NAFTA, which was negotiated in secret, would allow trade panels to meet in secret and overrule public laws.

In short, NAFTA represents not only an economic blow against labor and farmers, it not only raises a serious environmental threat, but it permits the secret and arbitrary veto of laws passed in public and by democratic means. For multinationals, it will mean not only private gain but the privatization of democracy itself.

Why I'm only sort of Green

Now that Greens are getting into conventional politics, they're going to start running into people like me. And I'm one of the easy ones. After all, I've always liked the Greens. In fact, back in the early seventies, a group of us in the DC Statehood Party came up with a platform that was very Green. Like Victor Borge's uncle who invented a soft-drink called 6-Up and died penniless, little did we know how close we came.

I think the Green philosophy is the most important new ideology in half a century. I have no problem with their ten key values, although several of them seem a bit pompous and they'd be easier to remember if there were only three or four. I admire the Greens I know, I've contributed to the cause, I read their journals and I agree with many Green policies.

But despite all this, I have never gotten actively involved with the Green movement. I guess you could call me a couch Green. The problem is that when you come right down to it, I don't feel I'm good enough to be a Green. I doze when I read Green magazines, I can't remember what Green acronyms mean, I like Big Macs, and I drive my car too much. I'm like the guy who admitted to the *New York Times* that he didn't recycle cat food cans because he couldn't stand the smell as he washed them out and I'm afraid that if I attended a Green meeting I would be found out.

Further, I have a suspicion that a lot of people in the Green movement were also in my Soc Sci 2 class, writing ten pages on the differences between Locke and Rousseau while I was struggling to fill one.

I know that having a strong moral core is part of what has made the Greens as successful as they are. I understand the role of philosophical debate and discussion in creating a movement. And I respect mightily the Green emphasis on finding the right way to decide whatever you are going to do. But I also admit to a strong desire to let someone else take care of it.

Until the Greens decided to get involved in politics, I was never quite sure whether they were a political movement or a church. Maybe they were part of what Fran

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Liebowitz calls the "religious left." Certainly there was an aura that to be "part" of the Green movement demanded not only acceptance of a catechism but a commitment that went far beyond that required by any political party I had previously encountered. There was, it appeared, no 'motor voting' among the Greens.

Thus it was encouraging to find Greens actually showing up on the ballot. Now they were getting on to my turf, politics, where few practiced what they preached, but the best avoided preaching what they practiced. A place with few saints, but home court for well-meaning sinners. An opportunity to discover the expediency of our ideals, the survival value of our morality, and the self-interest in our virtue.

Politics is not a neat place. A young legislator once asked Earl Long whether ideals had any place in politics. "Hell yes," said Ol' Earl, "you should use ideals or any other damn thing you can get your hands on." I've known politicians whose only virtue was that they voted right; I have known others who could exude virtue even as they eviscerated virtuous legislation.

Vaclav Havel says that genuine politics is "simply a matter of serving those around us, serving the community, and serving those who will come after us." Or as James Michael Curley put it, "Wherever I have found a thistle, I endeavored to replace it with a rose."

Politics is the sound of the air coming out of the balloon of our expectations and it is the music of hope. It is laundry lists and dirty laundry, new hospitals and old hates, finding out what others think about something, and the willing suspension of our closest beliefs in order to get through the next month or year. Not least, as Paul Begala says, politics "is show business for ugly people," a theatre in which each voter and candidate writes a different morality play.

It is hard to descend from the mountain top of exquisitely constructed ideology into the thorny, rock-strewn valley of politics. But in the end, the only test of faith is when it is put to work. It is a test that is graded on a curve -- not by its proximity to perfection but by its improvement over all previous, surrounding and potential imperfections.

The moral person can not, without dire consequences to others, impose ideals on a political community, but can only, as the Quakers say, witness them. Empirically, the results are highly unpredictable. The whims of history, chance, the symbiotic relationship of all individual ideals existing at a particular moment, and the weather on election day determines the outcome. To fail in this context is not necessarily a failure of morality or of leadership, but often nothing more than bad luck. Six months or years earlier or later, the same actions could produce markedly different results.

In practicing such existential politics, the burden of one's ideology lightens. And it becomes possible to discover the little things that might have, or might still, make a difference. It may not be one's message at all, but one's tone. The philosophy may be right but the specific legislative application awry. You may have been talking philosophy while thinking American, rather than -- more productively -- the other way around. You may have been arguing with statistics and assumptions when you should have tried anecdotes and analogies.

In *Summer Meditations*, Havel says that a politician does not have to lie but "need only be sensitive and know when, what, to whom, and how to say what he has to say. It is not true that a person of principle does not belong in politics; it is enough for his principles to be leavened with patience, deliberation, a sense of proportion, and an understanding of others."

This is the part of politics that doesn't appear in any platform. Done badly, it becomes demagoguery and manipulation. Done well it makes every voter a part of the office the politician holds.

Can the Greens survive in such a murky, illogical and tempting environment -- potentially as toxic as any against which their environmental creed inveighs? I suspect so -- if they take into their hearts -- as well their minds -- their own faith in the power of decentralized public conversation and decision. But to do this, they must accept the fact that many, if not for a long time most, of the voices will not be pals of their paradigm. They will buy bits and piece of the program, they'll like a particular candidate, or favor a candidate's stand on a certain issue. But they won't be Greens as the Greens describe themselves. It will be frustrating, humbling and confusing.

But if any political group has done the moral homework necessary to go into politics and survive with honor, it is the Greens. Once they have made as many political mistakes as the rest of us, they may even come to enjoy it and learn to tell jokes on themselves and get Mrs. Johnson's sewer bill straightened out even though it's not in the platform.

Anyway, it's not so bad to be wrong from time to time. Despite their complaints, that's how Americans like their politicians. It helps to keep them under control. And to some of us it would be a sign that now we, too, could call ourselves Greens. -- *Sam Smith*

Conservative Orange County judge James Gray and San Jose Police Joseph McNamara have called for the sale of now-illegal drugs at licensed pharmacies. Under the plan, the cost would be about one-quarter of street prices, with a 40% tax earmarked for drug treatment and education, an advertising ban and vigorous prosecution of drug-related offenses.

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WEATHER REPORT

Just politics

The sleeper issue of the year may well be the calling of a constitutional convention. This has never happened but could, since states agreeing to such a convention on the balanced budget issue are now nearing the requisite number. Some argue that five more states are needed, others that only two more are required as the action of three states rescinding their approval is invalid.

There are other difficult legal questions such as whether it is proper to call a convention for just a single issue -- such as a balanced budget amendment -- or whether the convention can consider anything it wishes. In any event, each amendment adopted by the convention would have to be approved by three-quarters of the state legislatures.

Opponents of the constitutional convention idea run the gamut from the ACLU to Phyliss Schlafly's Eagle Forum. President Clinton also opposes the idea.

Progressives are becoming increasingly concerned about the infiltration of the religious right into local politics. Borrowing from the stealth tactics of the LaRouchies, the Bible bullies have found that they can win office by keeping their extremism under wraps as they go for offices where there is little opposition.

The Feminist Majority reports that the religious right recently gained control of the Iowa state Republican party simply by having its members volunteer for positions within the party. Similar tactics have paid off in Washington, Kansas, Virginia and California.

After the religious right took over the Washington state GOP, they adopted a party platform that included an abortion ban, discrimination against homosexuals, Bible readings, the teaching of creationism, corporal punishment in schools and reclaiming the Panama Canal.

> This is not a Latin American junta. What you have is the civilian commander-in-chief articulating a policy [on gays in the military] that was part of a platform he was elected on. . . This is a country where the civilians do call the shots and the armed forces serve at the pleasure of the public. They may not like it, but they should go along.
>
> *--Arthur Kropp, People for the American Way*

The two main ecology parties in France have agreed not to run candidates against each other. The Greens and the Generation Ecologie will split legislative districts. The two parties differ in a number of respects. The Greens want the shutdown of a major nuclear reactor, a moratorium on nuclear testing the Pacific, the ending of some freeway building and a 35-hour work-week. Generation Ecologie is less strong on the last two issues, but agrees with the Greens that nuclear power should be phased out. A Harris poll has indicated that a majority of French voters agree with the Green platform except for halting freeway construction.

A survey by the National Institute of Strategic Research finds the Ukrainian Green Party enjoying the support of 40% of the population of that country, well ahead of the next party which has 25% support.

Rep. Timothy Penny plans to introduce a bill outlawing restrictive ballot access rules in federal elections. If such a bill were passed, says *Ballot Access News,* it would have its biggest effect on congressional races where access laws can be so restrictive that no third party congressional candidate has made it to the ballot in Georgia since 1942, and only one in Florida since 1920.

Third party candidates and independents won 3.7% of the total vote for the House of Representatives in last fall's elections, believed to be the highest percentage since 1936. Here are the vote totals for the major efforts as compiled by *Ballot Access News*:

PARTY	VOTES	BEST RESULTS
Independents	1,574,000	VT 59% OH 21% FL 10%
Libertarians	900,000	PA 10% SC 7%
Conservative (NY)	326,000	NY 6%
Peace & Freedom (CA)	268,000	CA 4%
A Connecticut Party	208,000	CT 17%
Greens	134,000	ME 9% FL,CA,MO 4%
Natural Law	114,000	AZ 4%

Clintoniana

Pat Moynihan, chair of the Senate Finance Committee, is being dissed by the White House. Moynihan told *Time,* "Not since November. Not a single call. Not from the president or any of his top people. I just don't get it." *Time* went to one of these top people and got this response: "Big deal. Moynihan supported Bob Kerrey during the primaries. He's not one of us, and he can't control Finance the way Bentsen did... We'll roll right over him if we have to."

Perhaps Moynihan should ask Al D'Amato how he does it. While everyone was fixated on Judge Kimba Wood's household hiring practices, the fact that she arrived

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Moynihan's predecessor, Lloyd Bentsen, on the other hand, had considerably better luck. He may well be the only presidential nominee ever confirmed by a Senate Committee *before* it had questioned him. On the morning in question only eleven of the 20 senators were on hand at the start of the confirmation hearings. According to the *New Yorker*, Senator Robert Dole, "who is known for his sense of nihilistic mischief," turned to an aide and said, "Why not vote now?"

Upon hearing what Sen. Moynihan described as this "gracious suggestion," the committee proceeded to hold the vote, including proxies from absent senators. Senator Bill Bradley, who arrived late, "looked thunderstruck when an aide leaned forward and whispered in his ear, 'You've already voted.'"

CLINTON REPORT CARD

DEMOCRACY & CIVIL LIBERTIES	**C**
Gays in the military: *Who's commander in chief? Stay tuned.*	INC
Executive orders on abortion	A
ENVIRONMENT	**A**
Abolishing council on competitiveness	A
ECONOMICS AND FINANCE	**D+**
• Public works program: *Should have been bigger and effects are counteracted by higher taxes*	D
• Tax policy: *Timing, stupid*	D
Extending unemployment benefits	A
FOREIGN AFFAIRS	**D**
Bosnia	D
Haiti	D
GENERAL GOVERNMENT	**D**
• Cabinet choices	D
White House staff cuts: *You forgot to count the 900 Pentagon employees detailed to the White House and you counted folks you reassigned elsewhere in the government*	D
HEALTH AND WELFARE	**C+**
Increased aid to homeless	A
Increased Head Start funding	A
• Welfare reform: *If you're going to force people to work after two years you better have the jobs for them. Clinton also seems to toying with some form of benign enforced labor.*	F
Family leave policy	A
TECHNOLOGY	**F**
If there ever was a group that didn't need government assistance it's the high tekkies, some of whom are the same folks who have been ripping off the Pentagon for years. Clinton's proposed technology centers are a big potential boondoggle	
TRANSPORTATION	**F**
New highway construction: You say you're trying to save energy, remember?	F
High speed trains: *Forget them until America has a decent low-tech rail and bus system*	F
This month's grade	***D+***

When Clinton was inaugurated, Arkansas Governor Jim Guy Tucker came to Washington to see his old boss sworn in. That left the state under the control of the president pro tem of the senate, Little Rock dentist Jerry Jewell.

Jewell used his power as acting governor to issue a number of pardons, one of them for a convicted drug dealer, Tommy McIntosh.

The pardons were a big subject of controversy in Arkansas and not the least of the questions was: how did McIntosh get included?

Enter Robert "Say" McIntosh, father of Tommy, and a colorful political activist. According to the *Washington Times*, many in the state "say it was a political payoff, offered in exchange for dirty tricks Mr. McIntosh played on Clinton political opponents during the presidential campaign, or as a payoff for stopping his attacks on Mr. Clinton."

It seems that the elder McIntosh had worked for Clinton in his last state campaign and, according to McIntosh in a 1991 lawsuit, had agreed not only to pay him $25,000 but to help him market his recipe for sweet potato pie and to pardon his son. He also alleged that Clinton expected McIntosh's help in covering up a trail of sexual indiscretions.

McIntosh dropped his lawsuit a month after Clinton was elected president and, he claims, after the president-elect agreed to get his son out of jail.

The alleged deal has provoked considerable discussion in Arkansas. *Democrat-Gazette* columnist John Robert Starr wrote that even his own brother believes in the plot: "I don't agree with Joe's conspiracy theory, but given that there has been no other explanation forthcoming, it's as good as any."

The younger McIntosh was released 18 years before he was eligible for parole.

Clinton has proposed the creation of 100 community development banks modeled after Chicago's Southshore Bank. It may be harder than it looks. Says a Southshore official, "We are a regular bank which has decided to make a profit lending in a poor neighborhood. We did not start this bank from scratch, but purchased an existing bank, which is the preferred way to do this. It has taken us nearly 20 years to get this far, and I can't see how you can do 100 of these in five years."

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As Clinton was fumbling around trying to find an attorney general, the Justice Department was under the watchful, albeit highly unofficial, eye of Webb Hubbell, Hillary Clinton's former law partner. Hubbell is also a close buddy of Clinton's. Back when Clinton decided it was time for a state ethics commission, he appointed Hubbell to it. After the state house of representatives passed strong ethics legislation, it got hung up in the state senate. Thereupon, according to the *New York Times* last spring, Clinton, Hubbell and others rewrote the legislation to exempt the governor from some of its most rigorous provisions. Clinton says he did this to make sure the legislation was approved.

Hubbell also was the lawyer for Park on Meter, a parking meter manufacturer in Russellville, Arkansas, which received the first industrial development loan (for $2.75 million) from the Arkansas Development Finance Authority in 1985. It has been suspected that POM was doing a lot more than making parking meters -- specifically that it had secret federal contracts to make components of chemical and biological weapons and devices to carry them on C-130s for the Contras. The company denies the Contra connection although it now admits having secret military contracts. Right next to POM, on land previously owned by it, is an Army reserve chemical warfare company.

Hubbell's name surfaced as a potential nominee for deputy attorney general but he told friends he did not want that job or, according to *Time*, "to take any other position that involves Senate confirmation -- perhaps to avoid fishing expeditions into the law firm's confidential business."

Not only did the National Security Council survive Clinton's White House staff cuts rather well (see chart this issue), it showed its power where it really counts. Clinton reduced the number of White House staffers entitled to chauffeur-driven cars from six to three. The three are the chief of staff, the national security adviser and his deputy.

Lawrence Summers, nominated as Clinton's Undersecretary for International Affairs for the Treasury Department, once wrote a memo the World Bank's chief economist in which he said, "I think the economic logic behind dumping a load a toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that." Summers suggested sending the toxics to "under-polluted" African countries.

Eco-notes

While there is no evidence that we used nuclear weapons in the Iraqi massacre, that doesn't mean we didn't leave a lot of radioactivity around. According to a remarkable op-ed piece in the *New York Times* by public health specialist Dr. Eric Haskins, we fired at least 10,000 shells made partially of depleted uranium, a by-product of nuclear production. Haskins, who was part of the Harvard Study Team's investigation of health conditions in Iraq, says it is "likely that the depleted uranium may have already contaminated soil and drinking water... If this is the case, Iraqis could be exposed to the radioactivity and toxic effects of uranium for generations to come."

Haskins suspects that the spent uranium may be the cause of cancer and mysterious new ailments showing up in Iraqi children. The death rate of those under five has tripled since the war. A British report concluded that there is enough uranium around to cause tens of thousands of deaths.

It isn't as if the problem isn't known by officials. In fact, when the director of the Albert Schweitzer Institute arrived in Germany with a spent uranium round, he was arrested and charged with "releasing ionizing radiation." And *his* sample was in a lead-lined box.

Correction

IN THE LAST ISSUE WE INCORRECTLY IDENTIFIED CLIFTON WHARTON. HE IS DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE.

THE IDEA MILL

Ecology

• Using a variety of devices, Amsterdam has announced plans to restrict cars in its central district. The restrictions will come in stages. In the first, streets will be narrowed by providing wider sidewalks and bike lanes and parking spaces will be reduced. Later all non-essential traffic will be banned.

The plan, which won the approval of 53% of the city's voters in a recent referendum, will also include speedbumps, an 18 mph speed limit and higher parking fees.

Amsterdam is also renovating many old inner city buildings, turning warehouses, old fire stations and schools into apartments in an attempt to increase central density and reverse the suburban and satellite city development favored during the 1960s. One city official told the *New York Times* that "we think the satellites were a massive mistake. They created enormous traffic flows with the inevitable pollution, accidents, lost time and high energy costs. The new philosophy is to bring people closer together, to have compact urban centers where people live close to work."

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• The Metropolitan Transportation Commission of the San Francisco Bay area is funding neighborhood work centers and the County of Los Angeles is establishing a telebusiness work centers in Antelope Valley. These work centers provide facilities for employees to engage in telecomuting near their homes. Employers who are now into telecommuting include American Express, AT&T, Citibank, Control Data, Hartford Insurance, Hugh, IBM, JC Penney, Mellon Bank, Sears, Xerox and several west coast communities. *[Sequoia Technical Services, 800-366-8370]*

• San Diego has converted a block formerly occupied by a large Sears store into 100,000 square feet of shops, cafes, officials, a supermarket, community center and 320 residential units. The commercial buildings are set on the street, the residential in courtyards, reflecting traditional San Diego architecture. *San Diego city planner John Wilhoit, 619-236-6218.*

• Sacramento's municipal utility is offering customers rebates of $400 to $1450 in an effort to replace some 59,000 inefficient water heaters with solar models. *Jane Goldman, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, 916-732-5117.*

• Seattle has agreed to sell a large parcel of city owned land for a cohousing project. The 23 houses are expected to range from less than $90,000 for a one bedroom unit to $190,00 for four bedroom homes. This cost includes the price of developing communal facilities as well. *Joan Schneider 206-723-9423*

• Philadelphia is taking down stop lights at nearly 800 intersections and replacing them with stop signs in an effort to slow down traffic and improve safety. The city has found that the stop signs reduce pedestrian fatalities by 49%.

• Some 1800 farmers' markets have been created in the US in recent years. A study by the University of California at Davis found that produce at these markets average about 34% less than the price in supermarkets, where farmers get only about 30% of the retail price.

• Toronto has approved in principle a plan that could create thousands of new housing units and shops on underused commercial corridors. The new plan would permit heights of up to eight stories where only two and three story buildings are now allowed. Housing would be located above stores.

• Luftansa, the German airlines, is planning to cease all domestic German flights by 1995 and to replace them with more energy efficient trains.

Economics

Tiffany's Soul Food restaurant, a racially integrated supper club with blues music in Highland Park MI, has won federal and state approval to accept food stamps in payment for meals. It's the only restaurant in the state with such approval. Says owner Ruth Addison, who is also a practical nurse: "It's possible to use food stamps at the grocery, but you can't buy cooked, nutritious food there. If you don't know how or can't cook, all you can really eat is cold cuts and potato chips."

ROADSIGNS

Civil rights

Average increase in quoted price for homeowners insurance premium for a poor, central city area as opposed to price quoted for same home in affluent suburb: 250%

Clinton administration

Percentage of Reagan's cabinet who were millionaires: 62%
Percentage of Bush's cabinet who were millionaires: 71%
Percentage of Clinton's cabinet who are millionaires: 77%

Ecology

Annual cost to US economy if greenhouse effect emissions were doubled, as predicted, by 2025: $58 billion.

Water use reduction at Hewlett Packard following conservation program: 52%

Time it took to pay for this program: 3.6 months

Savings & loan scandal

Amount of duplicate payments made to law firms by the Resolution Trust Company as a result of its "accelerated payment program" : $14,600,000

Amount of duplicate payments recovered from these law firms by the RTC: $97,199

Transportation

Increase in worldwide annual car production 1970-1990: 14 million

Increase in worldwide bicycle production 1970-1990: 60 million.

Number of bikes in China for every car: 250

Percentage of bikes in Japan used for work-related transport: 86%

US federal subsidy for motor vehicle transportation: $1000 per person per year.

Cost of traffic congestion to US economy: $100 billion per year.

SOURCES

CIVIL RIGHTS: Acorn study of 13 cities. CLINTON ADMINISTRATION: USN&WR, ECOLOGY: *Global Warming: The Economic Stakes* by William Cline, *State of the World 1993* FARMING: Associated Press SAVING & LOAN: *Washington Post* TRANSPORTATION *Worldwatch Magazine*

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FIELD NOTES

GROUPS

University Conversion Project: A new clearinghouse to promote peace activism and investigative journalism on campus. Currently working on a report describing right-wing funding of policy programs and student movements, such as military contractor support of Tuft's Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis. The institute works to "anticipate and preclude arms control agreements" according to its annual report, and its officers, who also teach at Tufts, receive hefty salaries for activities such as countering the European peace movement and attacking critics of the Patriot missile. *[UCP, Box 748, Cambridge MA 02142 617-354-9363]*

Black bulletin boards: Those interested in getting a list of black-run or black-oriented computer bulletin boards can contact Arthur McGhee via Compuserve (72377,1351), Internet (72377.1351@compuserve.com) or by phone at 213-735-4879

GATHERINGS

Community Land Trusts & Progressive Housing Policy: Conference to be held by the Institute for Community Economics, Aug 5-8, Cincinnati, Ohio. Also a two day training session on community land trusts. $130 for training session, $210 for conference, $290 for both. *[Technical Assistance Dept., ICE, 57 School Street, Springfield MA 01105. 413-746-8660]*

Institute for Social Ecology: Planning a number of summer programs and events including a conference on social ecology in LA the end of May, and programs on design and sustainable communities, women and ecology, and ecology and community. *[Institute for Social Ecology, PO Box 89 Plainfield VT 05667. 802-454-8493]*

READING

State of the World 1993: The useful and informative annual guide to global economic concerns. *[Norton, $19.95]*

National Green Pages: a listing of 1000 of the most innovative and green companies in the US ranging from community-based to major firms like Ben & Jerry's and The Body Shop. $4.95 from Co-Op America, 1850 M St. NW, #700, Washington DC 20036. [80-424-2667]

The Greens & the Politics of Transformation: By John Rensenbrink. An excellent review of the current state of the Green movement, how it got there, and what some its problems are. [$14.95 from R&E Miles, POB 1916, San Pedro CA 90733]

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